

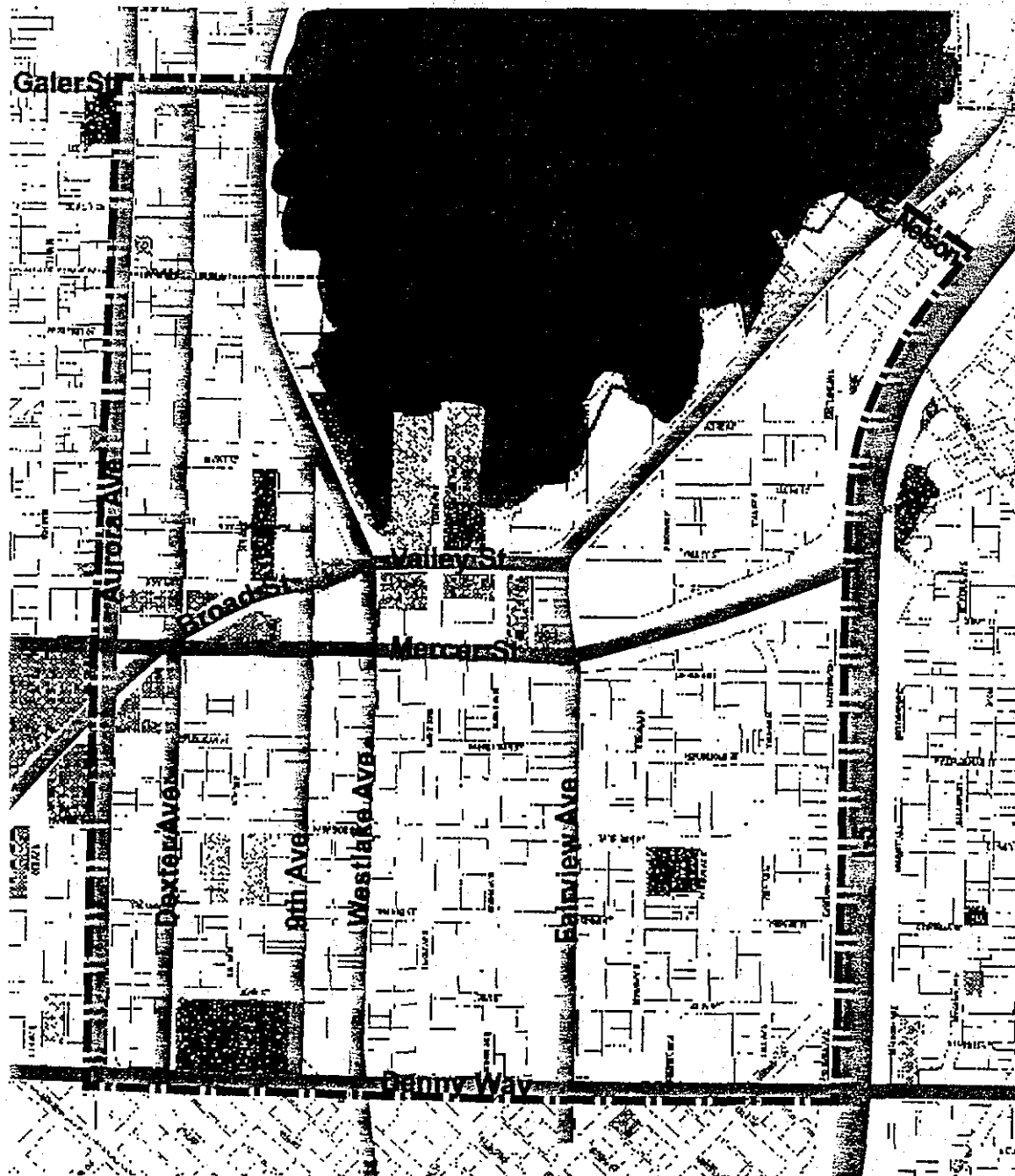
South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan

Existing Conditions

Planning Area

The planning area will consist of the area outlined in the map below (Figure 1). The area is bounded by

Interstate 5, to the east, Denny Way to the south, Aurora Avenue to the west and the Lake Union shoreline to the north (up to Galer and Ward Streets).



Planning Area — — — — —

South Lake Union Planning Area

Figure 1

South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan

Selected Background Planning Information - South Lake Union

The planning area is approximately 446 acres in size, and at the time of the 1990 census contained 461 households, yielding a density of 1 household/acre. Employment level in the planning area was at 15,230 for a job density of 34 jobs per acre. Growth planning goals for the planning area, as contained in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, included an increase of 1,700 households by 2014 and an additional 4,500 jobs by 2014. This would yield densities of 4.8 households per acre and 44 jobs per acre, respectively.

Existing zoned development capacity indicates more than sufficient reserve to accommodate Comprehensive Plan goals. There is zoning capacity for an additional 4,700 housing units and up to 26,500 additional jobs in up to 8 million square feet of commercial space.

The planning area includes areas zoned for light-industrial, commercial and residential development. The zoning in many areas allows a broad mix of uses, including housing. Areas abutting the shore of Lake Union are subject to special shoreline regulation.

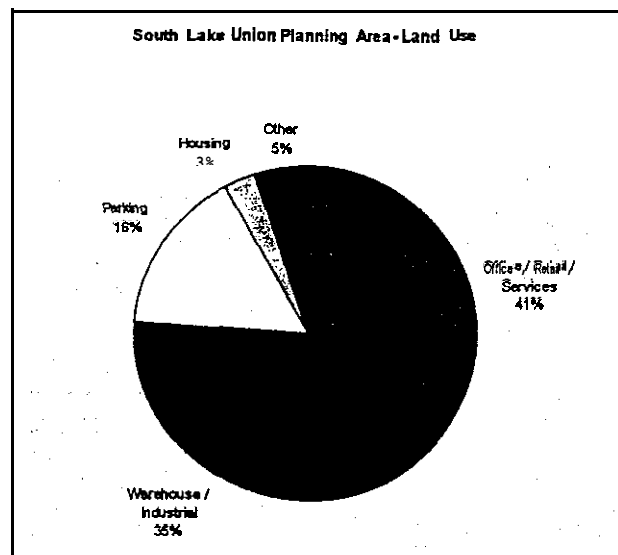
Twelve blocks in the center of the area are zoned Industrial Commercial (IC) to accommodate a mix of industrial and commercial activities, including high technology research and development uses. The northeastern tip of the area also includes zoning for industrial activity (IG-1 and IC), and generally promotes commercial and industrial activity oriented to the water.

The area east of Fairview and south of the Mercer access ramp to I-5, which includes the Cascade neighborhood, has been recently rezoned Seattle Cascade Mixed (SCM) and Seattle Cascade Mixed/Residential (SCM/R). Both of these zones allow mixed use, but the SCM/R zone includes special provisions to encourage residential development.

The remainder of the area is zoned for commercial development. The commercial zoning (NC3) along Westlake Avenue, Denny Way and the triangular area west of Aurora Avenue promotes pedestrian-oriented development, while elsewhere commercial zones (C1 and C2) accommodate auto-oriented and more intense commercial activity.

Height limits in the area range from 35 feet to 125 feet, with most areas in the 65-foot to 85-foot height range. Generally, heights are highest at the southern edge of the area abutting downtown, and decrease moving northward to the lake, with the lowest height areas along the shoreline.

Within the South Lake Union Planning Area, Office-Retail/Services are the dominant land uses. Combined, they account for approximately 41 % of the developed land. Close in total kind area is the category of Warehouse/Industrial which occupies 35%. The combined residential categories of single family, multifamily, duplex/triplex, and other housing occupies only 3% of the surface area and 5% of the surface area hosts other land uses that occupy relatively small percentages of land and are categorized as open space/public facilities, entertainment, and unknown



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Neighborhood Character

In defining the character of South Lake Union, it is difficult to avoid using the terms *multifaceted*, *complex*, *historic* and *working community*.

South Lake Union is significant for the consistent role it has played in Seattle's history. It is one of few places left in the City where the mix of uses commonly found in a turn-of-the-century city still exist. Residences coexist with small manufacturing and/or service businesses. Scale is a critical factor. Businesses are housed in two-to four-story structures, which relate to an existing street grid relying on vehicular access.

The mix of varied uses is demonstrated through current occupants of the area that include a large computer network firm, a cancer research center, the City's oldest park and one of the oldest car dealerships, studio space for artists, the State's largest newspaper, a major bakery and a Russian Orthodox church. South Lake Union is a focal point for Seattle's photographic services and the wholesale florist industry. This complexity of use is further reflected along the south shore of Lake Union. Kenmore Air's seaplanes share the waterfront with South Lake Union Park, the Center for Wooden Boats, private moorage, restaurants, and marine oriented service industries.

Congruous to this mixed-use character is the idea that different areas within South Lake Union can be defined through land usage. For example, the Cascade District is mainly a mixture of business and residential, supporting many housing types and social services. Westlake and its vicinity comprise the core of the historic industrial/commercial area. Waterfront uses are defined by the fact that they are dependent on, or are enhanced by, Lake Union.

Affordable Housing: South Lake Union has developed as an area for affordable housing.

Cascade neighborhood has been the primary recipient of affordable housing *through* private and public subsidies. Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 1994 South Lake Union has seen permits issued for 244 units of affordable housing, and permits have been submitted for 185 additional units. This brings the total units permitted and submitted for permitting to 429. This level satisfies the entire Comprehensive Plan 20 year period.

An additional aspect of housing that requires consideration (in conjunction with adjacent neighborhoods on Lake Union) relates to development and control of "live-aboards" and water-related housing.

Social Services: Social services in the South Lake Union planning area are numerous, particularly in the Cascade neighborhood. A report on social services analyzed by zip code indicates that there are 78 wide-ranging social services within the 98109 zip code which is comprised of East and Lower Queen Anne and South Lake Union. A comparative analysis of Denny Triangle/Belltown (98121) and Eastlake/Lower capital Hill (98102) finds that 49% of all available social services are located in 98109.

Development Trends: Over the last twenty-five years, Lake Union's shoreline has seen a dramatic shift in land use away from traditional maritime and water-dependent industry to commercial, retail and restaurant development. Additional trends include the location of biotechnology firms and professional services southeast of Lake Union, as well as mixed-use commercial and residential development along Dexter and Westlake Avenues.

Existing development in the planning area is fairly low-density. There are several sites that are developed far below their zoned capacity, including a significant number of surface parking lots and some vacant lots.

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Parks and Open Space

There are three parks in the planning area. The heavily wooded Denny Park, Seattle's oldest public park, is centrally located at Denny Way and Ninth Avenue. Denny Park is approximately 4.7 acres and is the current site of certain administrative functions for the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation. Cascade Playground, located in the heart of the Cascade neighborhood, is over 2 acres in size. The playground has had improvements completed for the grounds and play equipment and provides informal recreation space for school children and area residents. The park also includes many other uses, such as a community P-Patch and benefits from a highly supportive volunteer effort.

The third park in the planning area is South Lake Union Park. In 1991, the South Lake Union Park Master Plan was adopted for the development of a park at the south end of Lake Union. The Master Plan called for a 12-14 acre facility that would accommodate maritime activities and passive park and recreation space. To date, park improvements have been partially completed on approximately 5.5 acres of land. The remaining portion of the designated site is currently owned by the United States Navy and is expected to be surprised in the Fall of 1998, at which time the City would have the first option for purchase. Existing park uses are illustrated on the following page (Figure 2).

For its current population South Lake Union has adequate acreage of park space but lacks any active space suitable for adult level pick-up games. A playfield at the corner of Denny Way and Westlake Avenue, developed as part of the "Commons" proposal, is privately owned and subject to development. Currently, in the highly urbanized area surrounding the South Lake Union planning area, there is a lack of significant open space.

Transportation and Traffic

General Background: Transportation has played a major role in the development of the South Lake Union Neighborhood. It has helped by providing excellent access to area businesses and also drawn attention to traffic conditions due to the congestion that occurs on local arterials. Acting somewhat as a crossroads as well as a gateway to Seattle and major regional attractions, the arterials in South Lake Union are often taxed beyond their original intent. South Lake Union itself is a major traffic generator of vehicular trips due to the auto oriented nature of businesses in the area and a major recipient of pass-through trips owing to its connection to regional links (I-5 and Aurora) for surrounding neighborhoods and activities (e. g. Seattle Center). Within the neighborhood, all traffic is handled on conventional city streets, a few of which are designated as arterials. The City has studied the situation over the past three decades, pursuing various plans aimed at addressing what was believed to be the problem. To date, no solution has surfaced which meets the combination of traffic needs, financial constraints and local support.

South Lake Union has a well developed system of arterials and local streets. East/west traffic is served by two corridors, Denny Way along the neighborhood's southern boundary and the Mercer/Valley corridor at the south end of Lake Union. Denny Way connects to I-5 southbound and serves not only South Lake Union but also Lower Queen Anne, Denny Triangle, Belltown and the Waterfront. The Mercer/Valley couplet connects to both North and South I-5 and serves Queen Anne, Magnolia, Fremont, portions of Ballard, Denny Triangle and Belltown and is one of two options to get around Lake Union. Both of these corridors are extremely congested and operate at or beyond capacity several hours a day and during major Seattle Center events.

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South Lake Union Park

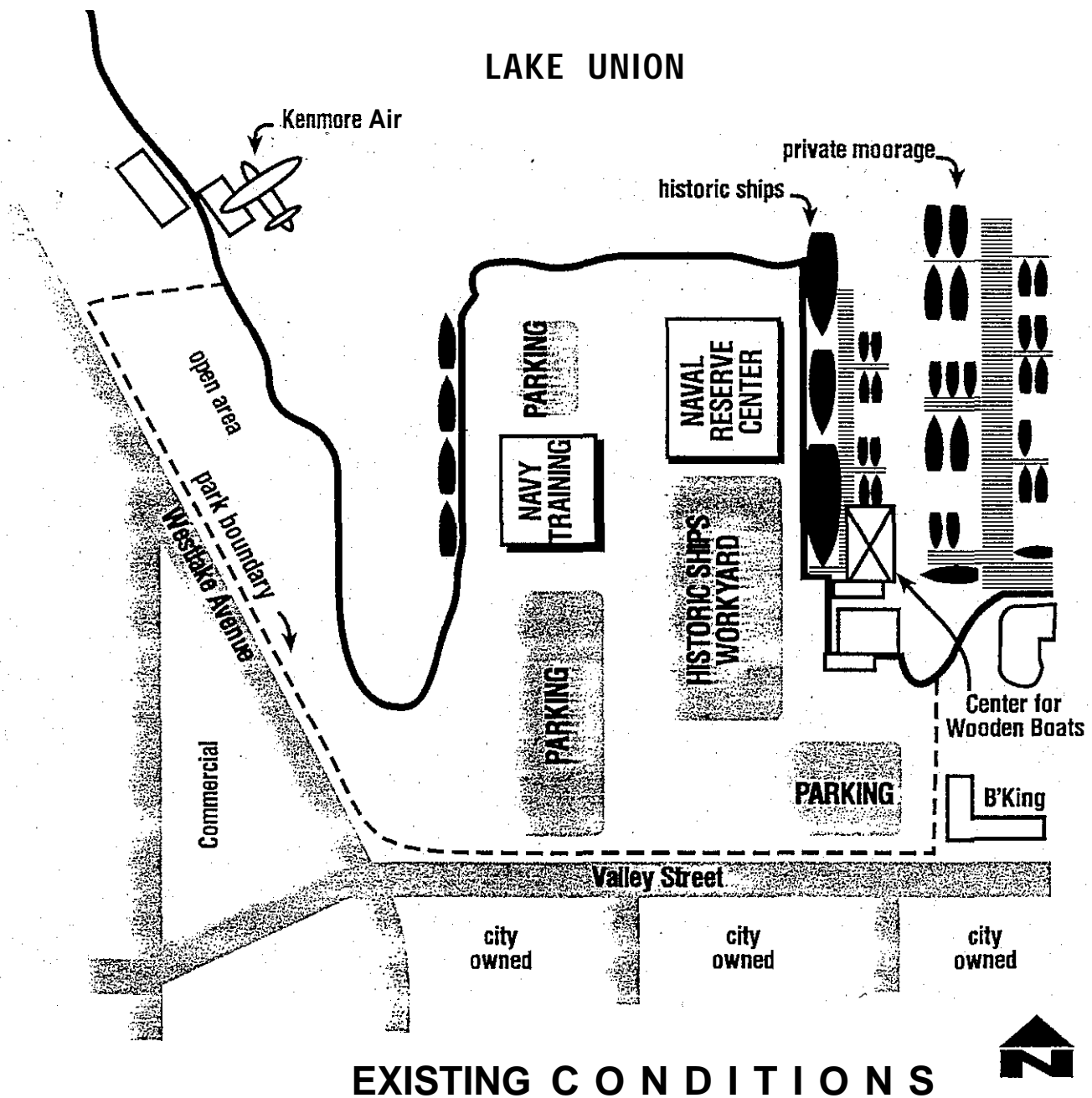


Figure 2

South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan

North/south traffic is somewhat better served owing in-part to the parallel flows of I-5 and SR99 (Aurora) and in part to the fact that four arterials carry internal flows. The Dexter Avenue corridor carries traffic and bicycles from downtown to the north end of Queen Anne and is generally free-flowing. Wesdake Avenue and 9th Avenue (one-way couplets) also seines from downtown to North Queen Anne and, except where they cross Mercer, are generally free-flowing. The Eastlake corridor is on the eastern edge of the neighborhood and connects from downtown to Eastlake and the University District. It is generally free-flowing. The fourth corridor, Fairview Avenue, connects from downtown to Eastlake and is impacted at crossings with Denny Way and Mercer Avenue. Congestion around the Mercer ramps to I-5 is the most problematic situation.

Traffic growth will undoubtedly continue on streets in South Lake Union. This will not occur so much due to new development, as the service area is generally built out, but rather to redevelopment as less intensive uses are replaced by more intense uses. This will occur in South Lake Union, as well as, Lower Queen Anne, Denny Triangle and Belltown.

Transit has not been a significant factor in serving trips to and from South Lake Union. While several routes do traverse the neighborhood, they are not coordinated to serve the neighborhood. Until recently parking has always been available and probably served as a disincentive to transit use.

Parking: Parking dynamics vary widely within the neighborhood, and it has only been in the past few years that a noticeable problem has surfaced. South Lake Union has enjoyed free on-street parking and benefited from numerous low cost surface parking lots scattered throughout the neighborhood. The first area to feel the pressure was the Waterfront where numerous successful area restaurants and businesses have taxed the limited supply. The second area to

feel the pressure was Cascade, where a recent zoning change allows residential development to be constructed without any parking requirements. This has upset the delicate balance that existed between area businesses and residents as they shared the available parking supply. Now there is extreme competition for parking that is detrimental to area businesses.

Elsewhere, in the greater neighborhood, surface parking lots are being converted for new development as South Lake Union experiences the development boom in Seattle. These lots serve mainly employees of the area businesses. In the absence of any strategy to replace the lot spaces or provide alternate access, it is unclear what business decisions will be made to address this situation. What is becoming apparent is the hardship being placed on area businesses and customers as they compete for fewer and fewer parking spaces and remain underserved by transit.